

Message Text

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ACTION AID-58

INFO OCT-01 EA-11 ISO-00 EB-11 IGA-02 AGR-20 DRC-01 SS-15

PM-07 CIAE-00 INR-10 NSAE-00 RSC-01 DODE-00 NSC-10

COME-00 L-03 H-03 /153 W

----- 010486

P R 051131Z SEP 73

FM AMEMBASSY BANGKOK

TO AMEMBASSY PHNOM PENH PRIORITY

AMEMBASSY SAIGON PRIORITY

SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 6293

INFO AMEMBASSY VIENTIANE

C O N F I D E N T I A L BANGKOK 13876

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: EGEN, EAID, TH, CB

SUBJECT: RICE FOR CAMBODIA

REF: A. STATE 171608, B. PHOM PENH 9175, C. PHNOM PENH 9211,
D. PHNOM PENH 9244

1. TO AGAIN IMPRESS ON COL. NARONG SERIOUSNESS OF RICE SITUATION IN CAMBODIA, AND ALSO TO OBTAIN MORE DEFINITE RESPONSE TO POSSIBLE GOVERNMENT-TO-GOVERNMENT PURCHASE OF RICE FOR CAMBODIA, ECON/CML COUNSELOR AND KRANKER OF USAID (LAOS) CALLED ON COL. NARONG SEPT 5, THE FIRST DAY HE HAD BEEN AVAILABLE THIS WEEK.

2. ON SUBJECT OF USG BUYING THE 25,000 TONS PROMISED IN PRINCIPLE BY RTG, NARONG REPLIED THAT BROKENS TO THIS AMOUNT AND IN ANY INCREMENTS DESIRED WOULD BE SOLD TO U.S. GOVT. ANY TIME. IN CONTRAST TO STATEMENT MADE AUG 30, HE SAID THAT MORE BROKENS AVAILABLE THAN PARBOILED, A POINT PREVIOUSLY CONFIRMED BY DEPMIN OF COMMERCE OSOT KOSIN. SAID SALE WOULD HAVE TO BE FOB BASIS WITH U.S. RESPONSIBLE FOR SHIPPING. IN RESPONSE TO SPECIFIC QUESTION SAID THAT USG COULD CHARTER ANY SHIP IT COULD FIND BUT RECOMMENDED THAT INITIAL INQUIRIES BE MADE THROUGH GOVERNMENT-OWNED THAI MARITIME NAVIGATION COMPANY.

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3. KRANKER HAS INQUIRED ABOUT SHIPPING AVAILABILITY THROUGH TMN AND HAS BEEN INFORMED IT DISPOSES OF THREE SHIPS OF 2,000 DWT EACH, BUT CAN LOAD ONLY 1600 TONS EACH BECAUSE OF DRAFT PROBLEMS. THESE SHIPS HAVE BEEN CHARTERED TO TRANSPORT SECOND 5000 TONS RICE TO PHNOM PENH. EMBASSY PHNOM PENH PLEASE VERIFY. CHARTER RATE IS 60 DOLLARS PER TON FIO.

4. ON SUBJECT OF SHIPMENT OF THAI RICE TO BATTAMBANG AND OTHER AREAS BORDERING THAILAND, NARONG STATED THAT HE RECEIVED REGULAR REPORTS FROM KHMER MILITARY IN THE AREA AND ADDED THAT HE WAS MAKING 2000 SACKS OF RICE AVAILABLE TO THEM, EXCLUSIVE OF THE 5000 TONS IN THE SECOND CAMBODIAN CONTRACT.

5. NARONG MADE NO MENTION OF DELAY IN RECEIPT OF LETTER OF CREDIT FROM PHNOM PENH AS FACTOR IN CAUSING DELAY IN SHIPMENT OF SECOND 5000 TONS. HOWEVER, PUBLIC WAREHOUSE OFFICIAL TOLD KRANKER SEPT 4 THAT LETTER OF CREDIT NOT YET RECEIVED FROM PHNOM PENH. EMB INFORMED VIA TELEX SEPT 5 FROM PHNOM PENH THAT LETTER OF CREDIT ISSUED ON BANGKOK BANK SEPT 3. EMB HAS BEEN INFORMED BY BANGKOK BANK THAT LETTER OF CREDIT HAS BEEN OPENED FOR SHIPMENT COSTS BUT NOT FOR THE PURCHASE OF THE RICE.

6. NARONG WAS ALSO ASKED TO COMMENT ON RECENT PRESS ARTICLE TO EFFECT THAT PWO NOW HAS SUFFICIENT RICE TO MEET DOMESTIC REQUIREMENT UNTIL NEW CROP AVAILABLE. HE CONFIRMED THE STATEMENT. THE SUBJECT OF THE BANGKOK POST ARTICLE OF AUG 25 ON RICE EXPORTS (REFTEL C) WAS ALSO RAISED. NARONG REPLIED THAT FIGURES GIVEN WERE CORRECT AND THE 200,000 ADDITIONAL TONS FOR EXPORT IN 1973 WOULD CONSIST OF WHITE RICE OF DIFFERENT QUALITIES AND PARBOILED. HE THEN SAID HE EXPECTED TO EXPORT 100,000 TONS IN ADDITION TO THE FIGURE HE HAD GIVEN TO THE PRESS. IN THIS CONNECTION, NARONG STATED THAT EIGHT OR MORE COUNTRIES WERE PROSPECTIVE BUYERS AND THAT ALL OF THEM WERE IN THE CATEGORY OF BEING IN URGENT NEED FOR RICE. EMBASSY AGATT BELIEVES RTG LIKELY TO DELAY ADDITIONAL LARGE SHIPMENTS UNTIL CERTAIN ABOUT RICE HARVEST.

7. PROJECTED VISIT OF KHMER FOREIGN MINISTER LONG BORET TO BANGKOK ON SEPT 10 ALSO MENTIONED TO NARONG WITH EXPRESSION OF HOPE THAT BIFGO WOULD BE ABLE TO RECEIVE HIM FOR OFFICIAL CALL (REFTEL D).
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NARONG MADE NO SPECIFIC RESPONSE. EMBASSY OFFICER HAS ALSO CONTACTED KHMER EMBASSY COUNSELOR HAK ENG WITH OBJECT OF OFFERING ASSISTANCE AND COORDINATING RESPECTIVE ACTIONS. ENG NOT YET AWARE OF BORET'S PLANNED ARRIVAL BUT IS NOW PROCEEDING TO DEVELOP PROGRAM. EMBASSY BANGKOK SHARES EMBASSY PHNOM PENH'S VIEWS ON DESIRABILITY OF SUCCESSFUL STOPOVER BY LONG BORET AND WILL WORK WITH KHMER EMBASSY AND RTG TO ARRANGE DESIRABLE SCHEDULE OF CALLS AND OBTAIN MAXIMUM BENEFIT FROM VISIT. RE PHNOM PENH 9329,

WILL ADVISE SOONEST REGARDING BACKGROUND INFORMATION TO BE GIVEN
BORET PRIOR TO DEPARTURE PHNOM PENH.

ACTION REQUESTED OF WASHINGTON: IF WASHINGTON: IF WASHINGTON
AGREES WITH EMB'S SUGGESTION OF USING USAID (LAOS) AS PURCHASING
AGENT FOR RICE FOR CAMBODIA, EMB THEN REQUESTS THAT NECESSARY
INSTRUCTIONS BE ISSUED TO PROVIDE KRANKER WITH REQUIRED AUTHORITY
TO BUY RICE AT BEST AVAILABLE COMMERCIAL PRICE. WE MAY ALSO
REQUIRE ASSISTANCE IN CHARTERING SHIPS.

ACTION REQUESTED OF SAIGON: PLEASE INFORM EMBASSY OF AVAILA-
BILITY AND RATES OF VESSELS SIMILAR IN SIZE TO THAI VESSELS BUT
UNDER VIETNAM OR OTHER FLAG.

ACTION REQUESTED OF PHNOM PENH: PLEASE INFORM EMBASSY OF MAXIMUM
DWT AND DRAFT FOR SHIPS ENTERING PHNOM PENH.
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